

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this amendment is language only. It does not add dollars or cost to the bill. It is important language to make sure that all of our activity and all of our spending in the disaster area goes to important needs. This language would base the allocation of hurricane disaster relief and recovery funds to States on need and physical damages rather than by other arbitrary allocation formulas. This is specifically in the situation where Congress, in a particular issue area, allocates a fund for the entire disaster area and leaves it to the administration to disburse those funds between the various localities and States affected. This language would simply say that when you do that, the administration has to think about a fair formula that is based on actual objective criteria that is based on actual objective need or statistics that make sense and then would have to publish that formula with regard to the specific funds we are talking about several days in advance of the money being disbursed. This would make sure that the money is used appropriately in the disaster area and is not allocated in an arbitrary or purely political way.

That explains this amendment. Again, it is language. It does not add any additional cost to the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3648

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up amendment No. 3648 which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. VITTER] proposes an amendment numbered 3648.

Mr. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide assistance to damaged fishery vessels in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita)

On Page 139, line 8, insert after "and" the following: "replace or". On Page 139, line 17, insert after "docks" the following: "vessels". On Page 140, line 22, after "repairing" add "vessels and"

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this has to do with the fisheries component of the bill. Thanks to the leadership of the chairman of the committee, a fisheries component was included in this supplemental appropriations bill because the fisheries industry was truly devastated along the gulf coast. Before this general fisheries provision was added, I believe this is the first instance in U.S. history where an administration has made a declaration regarding fisheries losses but has not followed that declaration of loss with a request for funds.

The chairman's committee action would, in a general sense, remedy that. My amendment No. 3648 would tweak the language—again, not add or increase any dollars—so that that money

could be used in part for the repairing of vessels in situations where those repair costs go beyond insurance proceeds available and other available funds.

This is a very large component of the need that exists in the fisheries of the gulf coast. Passing this fisheries aid package without making any of that money available under the proper circumstances for repairing vessels would leave a huge hole in our attempt to get that industry up and running once again.

To reiterate, this is language that would not change or increase the spending level of the bill.

I have explained my four pending amendments. I look forward to any further discussion on them as well as votes, hopefully tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum. The distinguished Senator from Kentucky is on his way. He wishes to present wrap-up, and then I have an amendment to offer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object—and I have no intention to object—my understanding was that I was going to be able to offer an amendment to the bill. I want to make sure that that amendment will be able to go first prior to morning business.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I say to my friend from Oregon that all I am doing is putting wrap-up on automatic, after which the Senator from Oregon will be recognized to offer his amendment.

Mr. WYDEN. I withdraw my reservation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING DR. DWAIN PRESTON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor an outstanding Illinoisan, Dr. Dwain "Doc" Preston, one of our State's finest educators, and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement.

Doc Preston began his teaching career in 1961, after serving in the Air Force, at Quincy Junior High School in Quincy, IL. Since then, he has taught high school and college students in a variety of fields including American history, English, and speech.

Doc Preston is retiring from his position at Quincy Notre Dame High

School, QND, where he has educated and inspired his students for more than 25 years. He has also taught at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Western Illinois University in Macomb, and John Wood Community College in Quincy. Doc has taught his mother, mother-in-law, wife, and all four of his daughters at some point in time. He also takes great pride in teaching senior citizens how to tell their life stories through writing.

Doc has served as a mentor and role model to so many students in western Illinois, including current and former members of my Senate staff. He has emphasized the importance of writing and public speaking in all fields and careers and gently encouraged even the quietest students to express themselves.

In addition to his many successes as an educator, including winning the prestigious Golden Apple and Rush Memorial Awards, Doc Preston is a prolific author and photographer as well as a professional storyteller. He possesses a lifetime love of politics and has been active in his community. He is a sage political observer and adviser, whether helping students on the Quincy Notre Dame Student Council or lending a hand in writing announcement speeches for candidates.

Doc is supported in all his endeavors by his wonderful wife, Regina, also a QND faculty member, and their 4 daughters—Carolyn, Cheryl, Deborah, and Teresa—and 11 grandchildren. He has shown his devotion to his family by writing poems and books to mark the births and birthdays of his grandchildren as well as the weddings and birthdays of his daughters and wife.

Mr. President, I congratulate Dr. Dwain Preston on his many accomplishments throughout his long and distinguished career. I am sure his retirement will give him more time to spend with his family, write, and cheer on the St. Louis Cardinals.

I thank him for his service and wish him all the best.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today, is Equal Pay Day, which means that 115 days into 2006, an average American woman will finally have earned enough in 2005 and 2006 together to equal what a man doing similar work earned by the end of 2005. Equal Pay Day is a sad reminder that gender discrimination is still very much a part of our country.

In America today, women earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. The wage gap exists in every segment of our society. Women of every race and national origin earn less than their male counterparts. African-American women earn just 68 percent of the average earnings of African-American men. Latinas earn only 57 percent of the average Latino male wage. Asian-American women earn 88 cents for every dollar earned by Asian-American men.